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ABSTRACT

Findings of a study that examined how information is used in schools that have adopted shared decision-making practices are presented in this paper. The study focused on how first- and second-year principals access, use, and value various kinds of information. A total of 24 out of 29 Louisiana LEAD schools responded to a questionnaire, an approximate 83 percent return rate. Respondents included 22 principals and 134 teachers from 12 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 8 high schools. Findings demonstrate empirical support for a positive relationship between shared decision making and the valuing of information. In schools where teachers reported high levels of involvement, shared decision making involved greater use of external information. Teachers who did not report high levels of involvement perceived the shared decision-making process as time-consuming and tended to rely on group experiences for decision-making information. It is suggested that beginning principals utilize university facilitators, acquire training in the use of informed decision-making processes, and act as information providers. Two figures and four tables are included. (Contains 15 references.) (LMI)

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Information Utilization in Restructuring Schools:

The Role of the Beginning Principal

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Information Utilization in Restructuring Schools: The Role of the Beginning Principal

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The term "restructuring" has been used to define a number of interrelated changes in schools and schooling. According to Goldman, Dunlap, and Conley (1993, pp. 71-72), restructuring may include changes in the core technology of schools, the conditions of teaching, the structures and authority for decision making, and the relationship between the school and its community. Others generally agree that restructuring involves a transformation of the learning and social experiences of students as well as the professional worklife of teachers (e.g., Peterson & Bixby, 1992). One component frequently included in efforts to restructure schools is more inclusive leadership and decision authority. Realms of leadership and decision making are broadened to include those who directly work with children; ideals about how schools should function are chosen from within rather than being imposed from outside.

Unfortunately, some restructuring efforts are based on the assumption that empowerment means granting power over decisions, ignoring potent forms of power such as that of information and expertise (Kirby, 1992). New decision structures require a broader distribution of these sources of power. That is, teachers expected to make critical decisions about curriculum and instruction must have the necessary skills to work together and the knowledge on which to base decisions. Thus, democratic principles of decision making may be a necessary but insufficient ingredient in successful restructuring; shared decisions are unlikely to become better decisions unless additional information is available on which to base choices. However, social psychology research has provided examples of how people tend to seek out information that supports their own assumptions (Langer, 1983). Further, teachers tend to devalue information gained through research, finding it irrelevant to the problems of practice (Tyler, 1988). Unless decision makers value the use of information and the process of reflection, increasing the flow of information will not increase the knowledge gained. If schools remain non-reflective, then, even with faculty decision authority, school experiences remain mis-educative.

Although teacher decision authority alone has some inherent advantages (Weiss, 1992), the effects of that authority are limited without the benefit of reliable information and information processing. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to suggest that schools that have entered into more inclusive decision authority have also provided opportunities to acquire and process information related to decision content. On the basis of interviews with teachers in 12 high schools, Weiss (1992, p. 360) concluded that "even those schools that appear most successful in managing participatory decision making do not display much sensitivity to the importance of good information, nor do they report much attention to the search for or use of relevant information in reaching decisions."

The Role of the Principal in Shared Decision Making

Teachers' willingness to share in school-level decisions is directly related to their relationship with the principal (Smylie, 1992). Smith and Andrews (1989) identified two

important roles of the principal in more effective schools as resource provider and instructional resource. In these schools, principals promoted staff development and innovative strategies, and were viewed as knowledgeable instructional leaders. Likewise, Heck's (1992) research identified the principal's promotion of discussion about instructional issues as a key correlate of effective schools. Hallinger, Murphy, and Hausman (1992) identified meaningful staff development and opportunities for within-school professional exchange as important information sources for improved decision making. In some school restructuring efforts, networks are established for information and idea exchange (e.g., Georgia's League of Professional Schools and NEA Center for Innovation).

Principals' willingness to provide opportunities for information acquisition, however, may be tempered by their competitive notions of power which only impede the empowerment of teachers (Bredeson, 1989). Although the notion of information as power is not new, the concept of facilitative power may be more useful in understanding new authority relationships in restructuring schools. Principals who use facilitative power as an alternative to authoritative power acquire and arrange material resources and information to allow teachers greater control over their work (Dunlap & Goldman, 1991). Goldman, Dunlap, and Conley (1993) found that as teachers became more collaborative, their desire for information increased. Principals in such collaborative cultures typically assumed the role of information provider.

Teachers have not typically had prior experiences requiring them to stay abreast of new research and technologies. Operating in isolation, they have not had practice with adult group processes; teaching based on prescribed curricula, they have not had practice evaluating and selecting from competing alternatives. Further, information is located disadvantageously to decision making. Although principals may facilitate information retrieval, too much emphasis on this role could exacerbate the tendency of some principals--particularly novices--to settle in as mangagers rather than leaders.

Hallinger et al. (1992) found that principals typically believed that restructuring would positively influence curriculum and instruction but could offer no specific strategies for how this " 'black box' transformation" (p. 346) would occur. The quality of teacher-made decisions--and ultimately of instruction--may be directly related to the value teachers and administrators place on multiple sources of knowledge (Weiss, 1992). Unfortunately (and, ironically, in institutions of learning), the nature of the professional worklives of teachers and principals has mitigated against the successful acquisition and use of information.

Components of Effective Decision Making

As depicted in Figure 1, we suggest that professional collaboration is but one of two essential components of effective decision making. Teachers and principals alike must be committed to devoting ample time and expertise to problem identification and resolution. Glickman (1985) described a model of effective supervision based on Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) situational leadership theory. He proposed that only when teachers reach a level of professional growth where they are willing and able to be self-directed should supervisors move away from a more directive style. Similarly, only when faculties have reached a level of professional willingness and maturity (specifically, in group processes) should schoolwide decisions become shared decisions. Blase and Kirby (1992) argued that empowerment is not equal to shared decision making; rather, it is both an earned right and a responsibility.

Principals also must share in the commitment to establish a collaborative culture. One key role of the principal and district administrators is the granting of teacher decision authority. This includes more than lip service to shared decision structures; it is also a commitment of time and resources. It requires a willingness to suspend judgment and avoid the search for quick-fix solutions. Shared decisions are by design more time intensive and more likely to create conflict.

The second major component of the model is effective use of information. We argue that faculty empowerment by definition requires access to information. Two necessary requisites of effective information use are access to and valuing of information. In exercising facilitative power, leaders create conditions for others to enhance their performance. This concept is useful in helping formulate a new role for principals in restructured schools, but it may be useful in defining the roles of other key players in school reform as well. Goldman et al. (1993) describe several activities of the leader who uses facilitative power. Among these are acquisition and distribution of information, tasks that need not be assigned or limited to the principal. One role, however, that must be ascribed to the principal is that of information "valuer." Without the principal's lead in insisting that decisions be based on the best available information--including that which can be gathered through data gathering and experimentation--teachers are unlikely to commit the time required for generating informed decisions and are less likely to themselves value knowledge and experimentation.

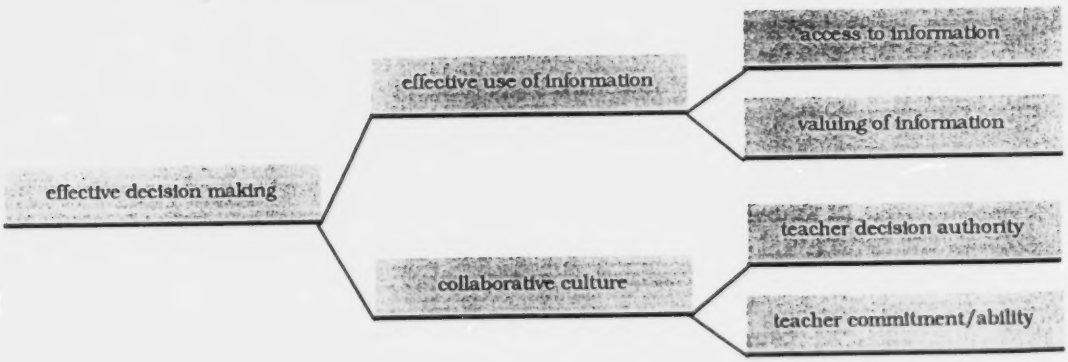

Fig. 1. Conditions for effective decision making by school leadership teams

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This study was undertaken as an initial attempt to determine how information is being used in schools that have adopted shared decision making practices. Its purpose was to explore the kinds of information sought, valued, and utilized by faculties in restructuring schools. Louisiana schools at various stages of restructuring were included in the analyses. Specifically, the following questions were addressed: 1) to what degree were teachers involved in schoolwide decision making, 2) what kinds of decisions were teachers involved in making, 3) what information sources were sought or provided, 4) which information sources were perceived to be of value, 5) what information was utilized, and 6) what was the relationship between use of information and satisfaction with decision making? The focus of this paper is on the access, use, and valuing of information in schools with first- or second-year principals.

Method

Sample

Louisiana LEAD is a two-year required internship for new principals. University facilitators train and guide participants in the use of a problem-based restructuring model. Faculty empowerment and consequence analysis are key components of the model. Each school creates a LEAD committee, typically comprised of the principal and four to eight teachers. The committee addresses a specific problem selected by the faculty. LEAD schools were chosen as the population for this study because they provided the forum for examining information utilization by teachers who were likely to be engaged in shared decision making. Although level of involvement in decision making was assessed, this question was secondary to the issues of whether and how information is used.

Schools at three LEAD centers that had participated in the LEAD process for at least one year were invited to participate in the study. Packets containing a brief description of the study, an invitation to participate, a principal Information Usage Survey, nine teacher Information Usage Surveys, and ten individual envelopes for confidential return of the instruments were mailed to 29 principals in the Fall of 1992. Principals were instructed to give the teacher surveys to all teachers who were members of the school's LEAD committee. Teachers and principals returned the surveys in sealed envelopes to a designee. Completed packets were returned by mail to the research team.

Twenty-four of the 29 schools (82.8%) returned usable forms. Twenty-two principals and 134 teachers completed the questionnaires. Because school LEAD committees varied in size, three to nine teachers ($\bar{X}$=5.5) represented individual schools. Where the school is used as the unit of analysis, teacher responses are averaged by school. Of the 24 schools included in data analyses, 12 were elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 8 high schools. Characteristics of the principal and teacher samples are reported in Table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample

	Principals				Teachers			
	Female		Male		Female		Male	
Gender	13		9		112		17	
	African-American		Caucasian		African-American		Caucasian	
Race	5		17		23		103	
	1-3	4-6	7-10	>10	1-3	4-6	7-10	>10
Years experience	9	3	0	7	8	20	12	83

Information Usage Survey

The Information Usage Survey (IUS) was used to collect all data. It consisted of ten parts: 1) background information (e.g., years experience, race); 2) level of teacher involvement; 3) types of decisions made by teachers; 4) preparation for group decision making; 5) persons consulted in decision making; 6) kinds of information gathered; 7) perceptions of the usefulness of the information gathered; 8) methods of disseminating information; 9) degree of satisfaction with the decision making process; and 10) a typical decision process. Parts 2 through 9 required responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); part 10 required open-ended responses about a typical decision made by the leadership team.

The initial IUS was administered to ten administrators and ten teachers enrolled in graduate education classes at one public university. In this pilot phase, respondents also were asked to provide feedback about item structure and wording. Based on their comments, some items were reworded and the order of presentation was modified. Additionally, based on respondents' recommendations, one item was added to assess whether teachers feel that they spend too much time on schoolwide decision making. Individual items were collapsed into sub-scales where appropriate. Alpha coefficients were judged to demonstrate adequate reliability of the sub-scales.

Teacher Involvement in Schoolwide Decisions

Teachers and principals reported overall high levels of teacher involvement in schoolwide decisions. Responses to the ten items of the involvement sub-scale were averaged to create a sub-scale score ranging from 1 (low level of teacher involvement) to 5 (high level of involvement). A mean score of 4.05 (SD=.47) for principals indicated that they felt that teachers

had considerable influence over schoolwide decisions. The mean committee score (for teachers only) was somewhat lower (M=3.81, SD=.44), and the difference was statistically significant (t for dependent samples=2.05, p<.05). There were no differences in level of involvement by school type (i.e., elementary, middle, secondary).

Because all teachers in the sample were selected on the basis of their involvement on the school's LEAD team, it was not surprising that teachers agreed most strongly with the item assessing whether they participated on a group leadership team (M=4.56, SD=.78). The item of the involvement sub-scale with which teachers agreed least (M=2.06, SD=1.11) referred to the principal's willingness to give final decision-making authority to teachers. Teachers felt that their involvement was moderated by the authority of the principal who maintained final discretion over decisions. Principals agreed with this assessment (M=2.20. SD=1.32).

Teachers reported moderate levels of involvement in all areas of decision making, with greatest involvement in goal setting and curriculum and instruction, and the least amount of involvement with budgets and teacher selection and evaluation. Principals reported significantly higher levels of teacher involvement in all areas of decision making. Teachers and principals agreed that determining goals and making decisions regarding curriculum and instruction were the most shared schoolwide decisions.

Teachers and principals reported that some level of training for how to make decisions in groups had been provided. The average teacher response was 3.45 (SD=1.36) and the average principal response was 3.90 (SD=1.07). This would be expected in that the Louisiana LEAD model is based on group decision processes. Principals were trained in workshop settings and were expected to train their faculties after each meeting.

Use of Information in Decision Making

Persons consulted

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they consulted various school, community, and outside persons when making schoolwide decisions. Most frequently consulted were other teachers and school administrators. Parents and students were sometimes consulted, but external consultants were seldom used (see Table 2).

Table 2
Persons consulted by school leadership teams

	Mean	SD	Rank
Internal consultants			
Other teachers	4.56	.68	1
School Administrators	4.42	.76	2
Parents	3.29	1.11	3
Students	2.95	1.12	4
External consultants			
Community members	2.83	1.18	5
Consultants	2.79	1.30	6
District personnel	2.78	1.27	7
Workshop presenters	2.71	1.28	8
University personnel	2.15	1.16	9

Information gathered

A list of potential information sources gleaned from the literature on decision making was provided. Subjects indicated whether they used each source in reaching decisions and whether they felt that these sources were useful in decision making. The sources were grouped as traditional or non-traditional. Sources of information that are found within the decision-making group and that do not require systematic gathering of data were considered traditional.

Traditional sources were more likely to be used and were perceived to be more useful. Respondents strongly agreed that they used prior knowledge about a topic, discussions with other teachers and administrators, and their own experiences in making decisions. External and non-traditional sources were less frequently used and less valued (see Table 3).

Dissemination of information

The primary means of disseminating information was orally at the school level. Although teachers reported some level of exchange at the district level, dissemination at the state and national levels was infrequent. Teachers claimed to exchange information through publication, presentations, and professional associations as well as word-of-mouth.

Table 3
Information sources used and perceived usefulness

Information source	Level of use		Perceived usefulness	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Traditional sources				
Prior knowledge about topic	4.38	.70	4.39	.75
Conferences with other teachers	4.30	.77	4.47	.74
Experiences with past choices	4.30	.78	4.43	.77
Conferences with administrators	4.20	.86	4.38	.86
What was done before	3.65	1.11	3.96	1.06
Average for traditional sources	4.08	.71	4.27	.71
Non-Traditional Sources				
Classroom observations	3.96	1.07	4.14	.96
Policy and procedure manuals	3.96	1.11	3.82	1.05
Staff development seminars or conferences	3.47	1.24	3.64	1.16
Curriculum guides	3.34	1.31	3.09	1.29
Professional books or tapes	3.00	1.15	3.03	1.13
Professional journals	2.99	1.21	3.05	1.20
Data base information systems	2.83	1.19	2.91	1.18
Average for non-traditional sources	3.29	.91	3.06	.84

Note. Responses were on a 5-point scale with 5 indicating highest level of use and strongest perceptions of usefulness.

Satisfaction with Schoolwide Decision Making

Teachers and principals alike reported high degrees of satisfaction with teacher level of involvement in schoolwide decisions. For principals, the mean satisfaction score on a 5-point scale) was 4.22 (SD=.81); for teachers, the mean was 3.98 (SD=.71). The difference was not statistically significant. However, principals were more likely than teachers to feel that they spent too much time engaging in shared decision making. Principals' mean score (on a 5-point scale where 1=too much time) was 3.18 (SD=1.30), whereas the teacher mean score was 4.05 (SD=.37). Using a t-test for dependent samples, the difference between the principal and teacher means was statistically significant ($t=2.82$, $p<.01$).

Level of involvement, kinds of decisions, kinds of information, usefulness of information, and level of dissemination were used in a step-wise regression analysis to predict teacher satisfaction with decision making. Level of involvement alone explained 60% of the variance in teacher satisfaction; use of traditional information sources was the only other significant predictor, increasing explained variance in teacher satisfaction to 72%. However, these results must be interpreted with caution because level of involvement was significantly related to several other predictor variables, including use of non-traditional information sources ($r=.53$, $p<.01$) and dissemination of information ($r=.61$, $p<.001$). The intercorrelation matrix for components of the IUS is presented in Table 4.

In general, teachers did not claim to spend "too much" time in schoolwide decision making. However, where they reported using a wider variety of information sources and valuing external/non-traditional sources, they were more likely to report spending too much time. Level of involvement itself was not significantly related to perceptions of spending too much time on decision making; that is, teachers who felt more involved in schoolwide decisions were not likely to also feel that their involvement consumed too much of their time. Especially when involvement centered around staff development issues and goal setting, teachers were less likely to report spending too much time in decision making.

As noted previously, principals were more likely than teachers to perceive that shared decision making was too time-consuming. Of the 21 principals who responded to the issue of time, 7 chose the mid-point on a 5-point scale, 7 responded 1 or 2, and 7 responded 4 or 5. The principals were grouped according to their responses and the high and low groups were used in t-tests to determine whether level of teacher involvement differed when principals perceived teacher involvement in decision making to consume too much of their time. Principals who reported spending too much time in shared decision making had teachers who reported higher levels of involvement, greater use of traditional and non-traditional information sources, and more positive perceptions of the usefulness of information (see Table 5).

Table 4
Intercorrelation Matrix for Sub-scales of the Information Use Survey (n=23)

	2a	2b	2c	2d	2e	2f	3	4	5a	5b	6a	6b	7	8
1. Level of involvement	.43	.63*	.53*	.73*	.64*	.42	.35	.57*	.56*	.53*	.57*	.46	.61*	.77*
2. Types of decisions														
2a. Curriculum & instruction		.40	.18	.25	.48	.24	.33	.56*	.45	.76*	.31	.62*	.51*	.33
2b. Operating procedures			.30	.56*	.63*	.46	.41	.28	.58*	.39	.54*	.24	.59*	.72*
2c. Budget				.63*	.40	.32	-.12	.41	.48	.46	.44	.36	.43	.58*
2d. Goals					.61*	.40	.10	.55*	.71*	.42	.76*	.26	.49*	.70*
2e. Staff devt						.67*	.44	.67*	.65*	.68*	.49*	.59*	.67*	.67*
2f. Tchr. eval. & selection							.54*	.50*	.17	.43	.03	.42	.40	.32
3. Preparation for dec. making								.41	-.03	.35	-.02	.53*	.38	.20
4. Consulted others									.49*	.79*	.40	.84*	.66*	.35
5a. Traditional info sources used										.51*	.85*	.29	.47	.72*
5b. Non-trad. info sources used											.32	.83*	.78*	.45
6a. Usefulness of trad. sources												.15	.43	.71*
6b. Usefulness of non-trad. soufces													.63*	.25
7.Dissemination of information														.54*
8. Satisfaction with dec. process														

* p<.01

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Table 5
Teacher involvement and use of information by principal perceptions of time spent in shared decision making

	Principals perception of use of time in shared decision making					
	Too much		Not too much			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	p
Level of involvement*	4.05	.26	3.56	.46	2.46	.03
Use of traditional information sources*	4.33	.16	3.73	.35	4.11	.01
Use of non-traditional information sources*	3.69	.41	2.78	.53	3.55	.01
Value of traditional information sources*	4.38	.21	4.05	.44	1.79	.10
Value of non-traditional information sources*	3.34	.33	2.88	.44	2.63	.02

* Teacher-reported perceptions aggregated to school level

Decision Processes in Two Schools

In the final section of the IUS, teachers were asked to describe a typical decision in their school, including the nature of the problem, who was consulted, what information was gathered, how a conclusion was reached, and perceptions of the results produced. Responses from teachers in two schools are presented here. These schools were chosen because they represent the extremes in level of teacher involvement for this sample. Both are elementary schools and both are from the same LEAD region. The mean teacher perception of level of involvement in decision making at Lakewood was 4.30; at Westland, it was 2.80. Mean responses on use of traditional and non-traditional sources of information at Lakewood were 4.20 and 4.00, respectively. At Westland, these item means were 3.37 and 2.65.

Seven teachers and the principal from Lakewood responded to the open-ended items concerning a "typical" decision. Three teachers described a decision regarding selecting dates for a steering committee to meet. They all described a series of informal polls and compromises that led to a satisfactory resolution. A fourth teacher discussed a survey that had been created to assess faculty morale which had been perceived to be low. Survey results, however, revealed that few faculty shared that perception. This teacher was satisfied with the result, indicating that she was pleased to learn how others felt and to know that everyone had an opportunity to be heard.

Three other teachers and the principal of Lakewood described a problem involving the supervision of children before the school day began. Children were allowed to sit in the hallways when they arrived each morning, but the need to supervise them and the noise factor interfered with teacher planning time. An alternative approach was sought by the school LEAD committee. All faculty and staff were involved in reaching a decision. Grade level meetings

were used to solicit input from teachers. Additionally, administrators, bus drivers, the transportation director, and parents were consulted. Information was gathered through surveys as well as from discipline and transportation logs. Eventually, a compromise was reached where bus drivers agreed to hold children who were arriving earliest, duty schedules were revised, and teachers agreed to take children into their classrooms 20 minutes earlier. Although teacher responsibility for children began earlier under these provisions, teachers were satisfied that they now had an uninterrupted planning block each morning.

Most notable in the resolution of the problem at Lakewood was an experimental mode. A group of teachers agreed to test the proposed solution with their children for a two-week period. Only after their initial success in piloting the solution was it adopted schoolwide. All respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the solution and agreed that discipline problems had been reduced. With regard to the decision making process, one teacher remarked, "I feel empowered.... With this empowerment, however, comes responsibility.... I enjoy the challenge and the responsibility."

Seven teachers and the principal at Westland described a typical decision at their school. All eight respondents identified school maintenance as the problem that was addressed. All eight agreed that the entire faculty was involved in determining the problem and reaching a solution. Information was gathered by the LEAD committee through brainstorming techniques. Although no one described the details of the actual decision, all but one teacher said that steady improvement had been made. With regard to the decision process, most respondents said that it was effective. One teacher said that it was "not effective" and another said that it "needs a little improvement."

Discussion

Quantitative results indicated that when principals are provided training in the restructuring of school governance, teachers are provided opportunities for involvement in decision making and are satisfied with their level of involvement. However, as Weiss (1993) found, little information beyond the input of the group is sought when decisions are made collectively in schools. Teachers relied primarily on the experiences of the group in selecting courses of action. Research, experiences of practitioners outside the system, and experts were largely ignored.

The data suggest that using information in decision making, particularly non-traditional sources of information such as classroom observations, was perceived as time-consuming. Although teachers claimed to value the use of multiple information sources, the amount of time required to seek out relevant information may impede their actual use of information. Unfortunately, the principal-as-resource-provider notion proffered by Smith and Andrews (1989) and Dunlap and Goldman (1991) did not appear to resolve this dilemma. Principals who reported using more information sources also reported spending too much time in sharing decision making with teachers. Because the principals in this study were all novices, it is reasonable to expect that any demand on their time would be perceived as burdensome. Yet, in schools where mechanisms to use information had not been implemented, principals did not report that the process of shared decision making in and of itself was overly demanding. Thus, if the principal is to be a resource/information provider for effective problem resolution, the time required for this added responsibility must be weighed against competing demands.

Although a similar study with experienced principals may be desirable, it is the novice who is expected to create and sustain the next generation of restructuring schools. Further, the

novice is less conditioned by historical role expectations. Of course, it is also the novice who is most vulnerable to criticism for risk-taking and experimentation. University facilitators in restructuring efforts can be particularly valuable to beginning principals. Not only can they share the responsibility for information acquisition, but they can help practitioners see the effects of information usage by encouraging experimentation and evaluation. By guiding practitioners in their own action research, site facilitators can enhance the valuing of information.

The model presented in Figure 1 relates the valuing of information to commitment to collaboration. The two case sketches support that argument. In schools where teachers report high levels of involvement, shared decision making involves greater use of information. Teachers at Lakewood described three separate problems they had helped to resolve. At Westland, all teachers described the same problem which may suggest that it was the only problem they had tackled collectively. Supporting this assumption are teacher descriptions of their decision process. They used brainstorming techniques and solicited input from the whole faculty. These are two requirements of the LEAD process. They were not required to solicit information from other members of the school community or from knowledgeable sources outside the school and they did not report doing so. Unlike their peers at Lakewood, they did not describe a detailed plan for resolving the problem nor did they describe a culture that valued experimentation or responsibility. Thus, there is empirical support for a relationship between valuing of shared decision making and valuing of information.

In preparation for sharing the responsibilities of school governance, principals and teachers reported receiving some training in group processes. Any level of training in information acquisition and utilization was not assessed, yet the data point to a need for such provision. Although the LEAD model did not specifically address the acquisition of information in decision making, university personnel may wish to enhance their effectiveness as facilitators by providing training in the use of informed decision processes. Information typically used is gathered from traditional, internal sources. Given the relationships between teacher satisfaction with shared decision making and use of information from all sources, and given the desire to move beyond "what has always been done," a movement toward greater use of non-traditional and external sources of information, as depicted in Figure 2, appears to be desirable to effect positive school change.

School reform may be successful only when schools become centers of inquiry for teachers and students alike. Rather than relying solely on prior knowledge, past choices, and social norms, teachers and administrators must base decisions upon both the recorded knowledge of the field as well as the practical experience of their colleagues and their own experimentation. The principal must take an active lead in recreating the valuing of information, but the addition of "information provider" to multiple existing roles may require that external restructuring agents rethink their own roles in facilitating school improvement.

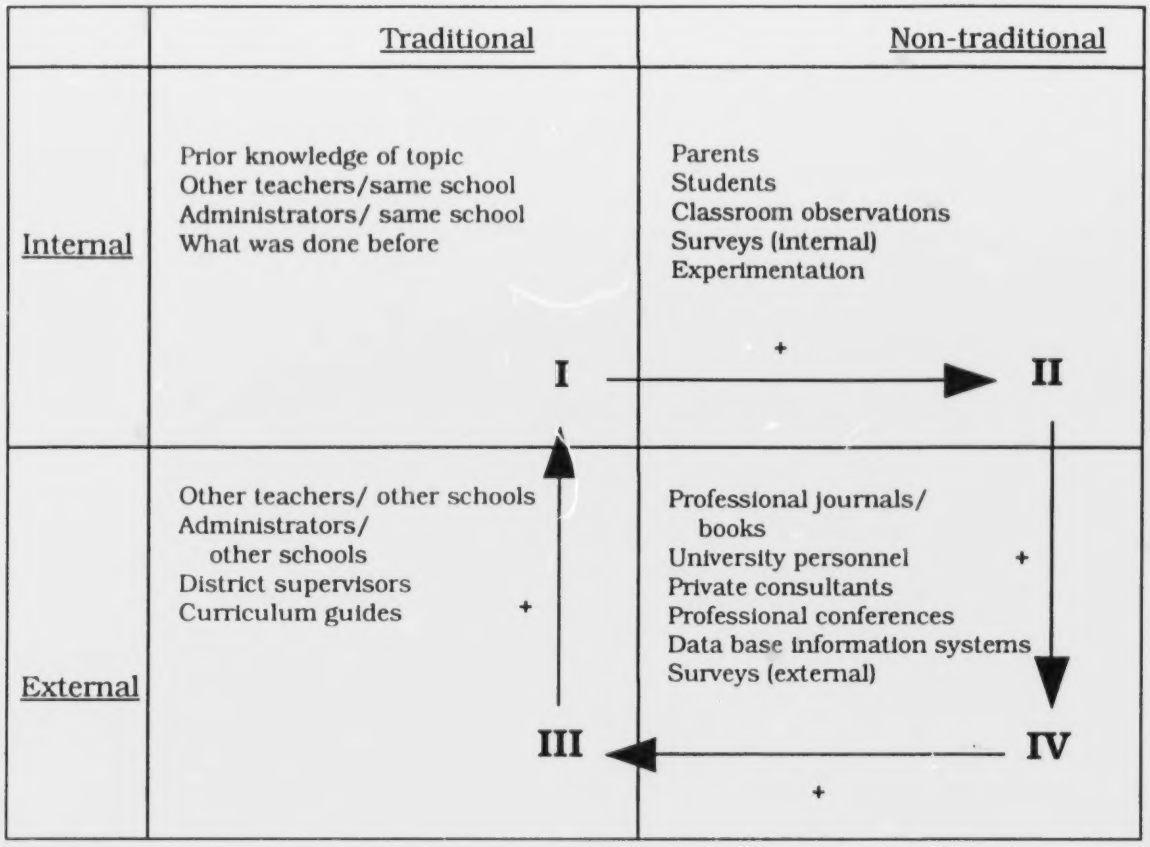

Fig. 2. Use of information in positive school change model

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